

patent. In fact, Lau criticizes prior art polymers in which crosslinking was effected via pendant functional groups (col. 2, lines 22-41):

Surprisingly, despite great efforts to improve various properties in nanoporous materials, and considerable work in improving crosslinking in nanoporous materials, there is no general method for crosslinking (a) without relying on exogenous crosslinking molecules, and (b) without adding pendant [sic] functionalities to the monomers. Therefore, there is still a need for methods and compositions that circumvent these limitations.

The present invention provides methods and compositions in which nanoporous materials are fabricated from fluorinated and nonfluorinated polymers having backbones with flexible structural moieties and with reactive groups used in crosslinking.

In contrast to the polymers that Lau describes, claims 17-40 specifically require the crosslinkable group to be present in the form of a pendant group. This is evident not only from the claims, but from the title of the application, which recites “Poly(arylene ethers) with Pendant Crosslinkable Groups, and Devices Incorporating Same.” Claims 17-40, therefore, cover polymers having structures criticized by Lau.

Applicant further notes that the Examiner appears to be confusing “thermolabile” portions of the molecules described in Lau with crosslinkable groups. Lau defines “thermolabile” groups as groups that produce structures that decompose at elevated temperatures (see col. 5, lines 19-21). Thermolabile groups, therefore, are the opposite of crosslinkable groups. The latter are designed are designed to produced crosslinked structures that resist decomposition at elevated temperatures.

Lau, therefore, teaches away from the polymers that are the subject of Applicant's claims. Therefore, the claims would not have been obvious in view of Lau, and the rejection should be withdrawn.

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